



PERMITS

Whenever you construct, reconstruct, enlarge, alter, or demolish a structure, a permit is required prior to starting the work. There are several types of permits that might be necessary for any residential project depending on the scope of work being done. An overview of what is in this technical guide include:

- [Building Permit](#)
- [Electrical Permit](#)
- [Gas Permit](#)
- [Mechanical Permit](#)
- [Plumbing Permit](#)
- [Demolition Permit](#)
- [Work Which Does NOT Require a Permit](#)

If you are doing any emergency repairs or equipment replacement, you may obtain a permit the next working day following the emergency.

All permits are valid for six (6) months from the time that the permit is issued. Every time that there is an inspection on the project, the permit extends for another six (6) months.

One month prior to the permit expiration date, an expiration letter will be mailed to the permit applicant. The letter gives the applicant the opportunity to extend the permit without paying an administrative fee.

If an application for a permit is canceled by written request to the building official within six months of the application date, or within 12 months of the issue date, a partial refund may be granted.

If the permit application or issued permit has seen no activity or request for extension for twelve months, the permit will be voided and the fees will not be refundable.

BUILDING PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

These types of projects require a *Building Permit*:

1. Building a new house,
2. Building an addition onto an existing house or attached garage,
3. Converting an existing deck or screened porch to Florida room (sunroom),
4. Building an attached or detached garage or carport,
5. Converting a garage to a habitable space,
6. Building a porch, screened porch, deck, associated steps or ramp,

7. Building or installing a tool shed over 150 square feet in area,
8. Finishing off an unfinished attic, basement or room over the garage,
9. Moving or removing a load bearing wall or partition,
10. Repairing, altering, enlarging or modifying any structural element of the house, including:
 - A. Any damaged structural element, such as load bearing stud walls, columns, piers, footings, foundations, floor joists, rafters, beams or girders,
 - B. Enlarging or adding a door opening or window opening,
11. Changing the use of the structure (example: change from residential use to a business use),
12. Installing a pool, hot tub or spa greater than 150 square feet, 5000 gallons, OR 24" deep.

ELECTRICAL PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

These types of projects require an *Electrical Permit*:

1. Providing new electrical service or wiring,
2. Upgrading electrical service,
3. Adding a permanent generator back-up to an existing electrical panel,
4. Installing or replacing any existing electrical wiring, overcurrent device, panel board, etc
5. Except installing any wiring or equipment which operates at less than 50 volts.

GAS PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) requires a permit for all work on gas (propane or natural gas) appliances. These types of projects require a *Gas Permit*:

1. Removing, replacing or installing any gas appliances, including piping and fixtures,
2. Installing gas logs,
3. Installing or replacing a gas fueled heating unit,
4. Adding or replacing any gas appliance, including:
 - A. Gas logs,
 - B. Installing or replacing a gas water heater,
5. Installing a permanent, gas fired, generator to back-up an existing electrical panel,
6. Installing or replacing a gas fueled heating unit.

Note: A permit is not required for:

1. Replacing a gas dryer,
2. Replacing a gas stove or range.

MECHANICAL PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

These types of projects require a *Mechanical Permit*:

1. Installing new mechanical equipment (i.e. new air conditioner, heat pump, furnace, etc),
2. Installing or replacing any furnace, hydronic piping (hot water piping), or its associated ductwork,
3. Installing or repairing any new vent or chimney,
4. Replacing an existing furnace with one that utilizes a different fuel.

Note:

If the mechanical work involves gas, a gas permit will also be required. If the mechanical work involves electrical work, an electrical permit will also be required.

PLUMBING PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

These types of projects require a Plumbing Permit:

1. Installing or replacing any plumbing pipe, such as hot and cold water supply, County water and sewer connections, well connections, septic tank connections, drain pipe, plumbing fixtures, etc..
2. Installing lawn irrigation backflow prevention device. Note: While a permit is not required for the installation of the lawn irrigation system itself, a permit is required for the backflow device required of all systems connected to Chesterfield County water system.

DEMOLITION PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) requires a demolition permit any time a building or structure is being razed and returned to original grade. It includes all demolition on houses, detached buildings, decks, etc..

This permit is **not** intended for the removal of interior walls (renovation work) or for situations when the existing structure is being razed so that a new structure can replace it - in this situation, a new building permit will include the demolition of the new structure.

For the Demolition Permit, the homeowner/contractor shall:

1. Complete a Building Permit Application,
2. Provide a plat showing the location of the building on the property,

3. Complete the Asbestos and Demolition Certification Form acknowledging that he/she has obtained a release from all utilities and given written notice to the adjoining neighbors.

An inspection will be made to ensure that the demolition is complete and that the grade has been restored to the point where the land will drain.

WORK THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE A PERMIT [\(BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\)](#)

The building code allows some work to be done **without** obtaining a permit. While a permit is not required, the work must be in compliance with the code. Some examples of work that does not require a permit include:

1. Making ordinary repairs and improvements, including, but not limited to:
 - A. Painting the inside or outside of the house or detached structures,
 - B. Repairing drywall, plaster, exterior siding, etc.,
 - C. Installing new floor coverings, such as vinyl, carpet, or hardwood,
 - D. Installing or refurbishing cabinetry,
 - E. Repairing or replacing porch or deck flooring joists. Note: A permit is required to repair or replace the joists or girders,
 - F. Repairing or replacing handrails on a porch,
 - G. Installing or replacing doors and windows, including storm windows, where no structural changes is performed,
 - H. Installing or replacing exterior siding,
 - I. Reroofing: Old shingle roof can be left in place provided that there are not more than two previous layers of shingles and that the existing shingles are not water saturated),
 - J. Installing or replacing gutters and downspouts,
 - K. Repairing or replacing siding,
2. Installing driveways or sidewalks,
3. Constructing or installing a storage shed, playhouse, etc, 150 square feet or less in area,
4. Adding a fence (which is not part of a swimming pool enclosure) and which is 6' or less in height – refer to subdivision covenants (if applicable),
5. Building recreational equipment, such as swings, skateboard ramps, jungle gyms, etc.,
6. Adding roof insulation,
7. Installing any wiring or equipment which operates at less than 50 volts,
8. Installing a security alarm system,
9. Replacing existing electrical water heater with a new electric water heater,
10. Replacing electrical fixtures, such as switches and receptacles,
11. Installing or replacing a ceiling fan to a pre-wired switch,
12. Replacing plumbing fixtures, such as sinks,
13. Replacing or repairing existing mechanical appliances including gas dryers, gas stove or gas range.